

And while the Senate refuses to work with us to work through our policy differences to reopen government fully, the House of Representatives will continue building common ground with House Democrats to restore as many services as we possibly can. The Senate should consider these proposals—opening parks, funding the NIH, ending veteran benefits application delays, funding FEMA and the FDA, and restoring WIC. They are things we can agree on. Let's not squander these opportunities for common ground. Let's pass policies we can agree on and work through our differences together. Regardless of the Senate's non-negotiation policies, North Carolinians still deserve to have their voices heard at their Capitol.

My constituent Jeremiah from Rural Hall just received a letter from his insurance provider. He tells me:

It appears that due to the health care reform, my insurance premium will double for the upcoming year. It also appears that there's nothing I can change with my current insurance provider to make it more affordable. I have been attempting to log onto the President's Web site, healthcare.gov, without success. I understand that I may be able to get a tax credit if I'm eligible. To my understanding, this will not help me in making my month-to-month bills. If this change goes through next year, I'll not be able to afford to feed my children, much less purchase health insurance. This needs to stop now.

Angie from Clemmons contacted me to say:

ObamaCare is already adversely affecting my family in several ways. My son and daughter-in-law's family health policies are rising dramatically. They both are already working full-time jobs, and each one has part-time work also.

Robert from Lewisville wrote:

My 27-year-old son, David, buys health care insurance through Blue Cross/Blue Shield of North Carolina. His current cost is \$111 per month. He received a letter from Blue Cross saying his current policy is being canceled due to the Affordable Care Act—ObamaCare. David's new cost is going to be \$288 per month. He works hard and does not take handouts from government. How is ObamaCare helping people like him?

Jeffrey from Boonville told me his story, too:

I went onto the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Web site this morning. If I buy health insurance today, the cost would be \$256 a month, but come the first of the year, the same plan will be \$556 a month. How is that affordable? This new law was supposed to make it more affordable. I've not checked yet to see if I can get a subsidy. Even if I was eligible for one, it's not the responsibility of other Americans to subsidize my family's health insurance.

Susan from Mocksville wrote to me to say:

I had affordable health care. I paid Blue Cross/Blue Shield of North Carolina \$181 per month. Now they sent a letter saying that if I keep this insurance, it will now be \$464 per month. This is insane. ObamaCare is affordable for who? Please, who can I contact to have some kind of influence?

Mr. Speaker, we share Susan's concerns in the House of Representatives. We want Susan to be treated fairly and to have the same 1-year break from

ObamaCare that President Obama chose to give to Big Business. And on Susan's behalf, House Republicans are trying to contact a body with some influence, the United States Senate, to find a way to reopen government and ensure ObamaCare is implemented fairly. But the Senate isn't willing to budge. They won't sit down to talk. They are not interested in making sure the President's unworkable law is at least applied fairly.

GETTING BACK TO WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, just days before the United States Government reaches its statutory borrowing limit, let's be clear: this is not new spending. This is agreeing to pay the bills we've already accrued. Senator Alan Simpson said it best:

If you're a real conservative, an honest conservative without hypocrisy, you'd want to pay your debt.

Eight days ago, a minority faction of the Congress chose to shut down the Federal Government. This was touching the fire. To refuse to lift the debt ceiling is to place our entire hand into the fire. A Reagan economist called this debate "playing with matches around gasoline." Yes, that's the same President Ronald Reagan who raised the debt ceiling 18 times without the accompanying brinksmanship. And let's remember, during the 2011 debt ceiling debate, the mere threat of a default scared the markets and drove up interest rates. Retirees lost \$800 billion in assets as markets tumbled. Home buyers lost \$100 a month as rates spiked. The harm this time could be much worse.

We need to pay our bills so we can start solving the real problems facing this country rather than fixing ones we caused ourselves. And, Mr. Speaker, what is most extraordinary about this fiasco is this: I thought budget negotiations were supposed to be about funding levels, but this Nation's most contentious budget fight in nearly 20 years isn't about funding levels at all; it's about using the budget as leverage to repeal or delay an existing law.

Despite the destructive effects of sequestration, in an effort to compromise, we gave in to the demands to the majority and accepted their \$986 billion spending limit. Just put this into context. The \$986 billion level is 17 percent below fiscal year 2010 spending and 10 percent less than the original Ryan budget. It is below Simpson-Bowles. If that's not compromise, I don't know what is. Those on the other side of this aisle don't know how to take "yes" for an answer. We agreed to deeply slash government spending. Please accept a victory and restart the government so we can get back to the real work of this body.

THE SHIELD ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise once again this morning to thank the men and women of the Federal law enforcement community, as well as those brave soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines, for what they do to protect this great Nation both abroad and here at home.

Certainly, we are thankful for them each and every day for protecting us in our Nation, but recent events again remind us of their importance.

After the Capitol was thrown into lock-down last week, Capitol Police and other Federal officers sprang into action to protect the building and those inside. In their rush to service, I'm sure none of them thought about the fact that as we continue in a partial government shutdown that they may not be paid even though, for some, that may have been the case.

While there is uncertainty about the Nation's fiscal path in Washington, that uncertainty should never be passed along to our servicemembers and Federal law enforcement officers. The Strengthening Homeland Security, Intelligence, and Essential Law Enforcement Departments Act, or SHIELD Act, of 2013 would alleviate that doubt. This simple, bipartisan legislation that I have introduced prioritizes and protects pay for soldiers and law enforcement personnel if borrowing limits are reached or if there is an interruption in appropriations like there is right now.

In our most difficult hours, we rely on our law enforcement officers and our military for the protection of our lives, liberty, and freedom. No servicemember or critical officer protecting the United States at home or abroad should have to worry about their paychecks in the event of a government shutdown, nor should they be used as a bargaining chip during partisan budget debates. Thankfully, during this current budget impasse, pay for our troops was secured early through a bipartisan vote, and I applaud the President for agreeing to it. However, the SHIELD Act would codify the measure into law, meaning paychecks would never again be threatened, and action would never have to be taken to protect this very basic principle.

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This bill already has the strong support of organizations like the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, which represents dedicated first responders. Just as important, it is commonsense legislation that everyday Americans understand and expect from a Congress that often stumbles in its responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, we owe it to the brave men and women who protect us—both abroad and in your communities—to make sure their pay doesn't become a